

Story 1915 (Dictated)

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of Bursa Province

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The Qualified Stupidity of Nasreddin Hoca¹

When there was no more flour left at his home, Nasreddin Hoca took a bag of wheat to the mill to be ground. The operator of that mill was a very careful and fair man, and he showed no favoritism to either his friends or important people. He therefore put the Hoca's bag of wheat on the floor at the end of the row of bags which had arrived there earlier. Knowing what kind of man the miller was, Hoca realized that there was nothing he could do but wait for his turn.

But while he was waiting, the Hoca was nudged by the Devil to do something which was quite improper. When the Hoca noticed that all of the wheat sacks were open, he stealthily took a handful of wheat from the bag of each of the other customers and placed it in his own bag. The careful miller did not fail to observe this and

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times he was also a teacher, for then education was the responsibility of the clergy. Since the Kemalist Reforms of the 1920s, "church" and state have been separated, and teachers are now required to have

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said, "Now, then,² Hoca, what is going on there?"

"Oh, I am so stupid," answered the Hoca. "Do you think I really know what I am doing?"

But, as I said, that miller was a very fair man. He said, "Ah, is that what a stupid person would do? You transferred the wheat of others into your bag. Why didn't you move some of your wheat into their bags?"

Without losing his composure, Nasreddin Hoca replied, "Well, I am stupid, all right, but not that confusedly³ stupid!"

secular rather than religious training. --Nasreddin Hoca has for centuries been Turkey's most beloved comic folk character.

²The narrator here uses the word bre, which can mean "Hey, there!" "See here!" or "Now, then!"

³The narrator here uses the word mudil, which can mean arduous, complicated, or problematical.